

I heard the majority leader say this morning that the President has not engaged, he has not negotiated, and the opposite is really true. The Republicans have been negotiating with themselves. They forgot that they needed to negotiate with Democrats, including the President. Why this failure on their part? In part I think it is the arrogance of power. They have been engaged in a power play. Also, the radical right that controls this House thinks it is always right. They are know-it-alls who sometimes have sounded like know-nothings. We see in recent days the Speaker, who is the father of this all, now kind of blaming his children that he cannot control them.

An example is welfare reform. I saw this morning in the National Journal Congress Daily this headline, "Welfare Bill Conferees Set To Unveil Compromise Today."

Compromise? This is a compromise by Republican conferees meeting with themselves, among themselves, shutting out Democrats, including the President. Congressional Republicans continue to function as if Congress is a partisan fiefdom. It is now 47 days since House conferees were appointed on the welfare reform bill and in those 47 days there has been no serious effort by the Republicans at bipartisan negotiations. They have been going it alone.

I want welfare reform, I have been working on it for years since the mid-1980's. Democratic conferees have expressed our interest in working with the Republican majority and in a letter we sent on Friday laid out critical areas that should be addressed. But regrettably instead of negotiating a bipartisan bill, the Republicans have been busy producing a bill that moves in the wrong direction in critical areas such as the level of funding by the States in child care. It is now clear that the bill they are producing is unacceptable to the President. On Sunday the Chief of Staff Leon Panetta said the President is prepared to veto this legislation.

I say there is a way out. True bipartisanship. The Republicans have to end their arrogance of power. Medicare, they want to stuff into the bill a proposal that would move this country on the path toward doubling the premium on Medicare in the next 7 years.

I say to the Republicans: Look. You have decided you control this House and the Senate and to go it alone. You have sent this country into a perilous course. You must pull back.

LET US BALANCE THE BUDGET NOW

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. CHABOT] is recognized during morning business for 4 minutes.

□ 0930

Mr. CHABOT. Madam Speaker, my hometown newspaper, the Cincinnati Enquirer, I think got it just right this morning in their editorial. I would like to read from that editorial here at this time.

To hear the overwrought, over rated White House experts tell it a "train wreck" between the president and Congress will shut down the federal government and end life as we know it.

Wrong. It would only interrupt life as they have come to know it—by temporarily slowing the juggernaut that increases spending with no regard to the future.

To the real world, a backward crank on the federal spending spigot would have a welcome effect: It could wake up Washington with a dash of cold war in the non-stop shower of taxpayer revenues.

By the time this is printed this month's "crisis of the century" in Washington may already be averted. But if today marks the disaster that the White House has predicted so long and loudly Americans should react accordingly by taking their cue from the president. Go golfing.

That's right. After he refused to negotiate and castigated Congress for not working overtime to give him another blank check, President Clinton laced up his spikes and left to play a round of golf. Some crisis.

Can this be the same president whose foaming mouthpiece, Leon Panetta had the appalling bad taste to compare Congress to "terrorists" who "put a gun to the president's head"—this, in the aftermath of the assassination of Israel's prime minister?

Yes. Because no matter what happens to government, politics goes on as usual.

The game plan by Republican leaders Bob Dole and Newt Gingrich is to box in the president by delivering a plan to balance the federal budget and wipe out chronic deficit spending in seven years as promised in the Republican Contract With America.

But Clinton, who once profusely promised to balance the budget in five years has balked, threatening a veto unless they restore enough of his spending to prolong the deficit pain for nine years.

So Republicans stapled the lid shut on the box around Clinton. They offered a temporary credit line to restrain spending but avoid a shut down until December 1 by continuing Government borrowing.

At first, Clinton refused to discuss it and would not even take phone calls from Gingrich and Dole. Then he agreed to negotiate if Republicans would scrub the key element of their plan, Medicare reform. Republicans said no way.

Both sides are playing politics, but at least Congress is trying to accomplish what the majority of voters demanded in 1994, a balanced budget. If that goal is finally achieved, short term pain is justified for long term gain.

Stop the swelling of a \$5 trillion debt that will be hung on the necks of future generations. Besides, the pain is not that bad. Even the worst-case train wreck is more of a bad fender-bender. Essential Government services continue, and despite the White House attempt to blame Congress, it is the President's constitutional duty to negotiate a budget with lawmakers. If Clinton refuses to negotiate, voters should remember that he alone decided to risk spreading flu through financial markets rather than balance the budget 2 years sooner than his own cobbled budget would have achieved.

In this overhyped showdown, this much is clear: For the first time Congress has a plan to balance the budget, and the President is trying to kill it.

That is from my hometown newspaper, the Cincinnati Enquirer, just this morning.

Madam Speaker, the Washington Post, on its front page this morning, also has it exactly right. I will quote from that. "For all the vitriol, all the finger pointing, all the carefully staged photogenic events, the real issue is the Republicans' plan to balance the budget in 2002."

Let us balance the budget now.

INTRODUCTION OF THE NO BUDGET, NO PAY ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Ms. PRYCE). Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. DURBIN] is recognized during morning business for 3 minutes.

Mr. DURBIN. Madam Speaker, America deserves better. Our Government is shut down. We are now in a governmental paralysis here in Washington.

And why? It is a politically created crisis. It is not a crisis that came because of the force of nature. It is something that was created by the force of politicians.

The Gingrich-led Congress has brought to us in the last year a record of mismanagement. They brought the Contract With America to the floor, 31 bills, and they published them in the TV Guide. Three of the thirty-one were signed into law, and we wasted 100 days that could have been spent on making certain that Congress did its work, and then, of course, the Gingrich-led Congress failed to meet its responsibilities.

They were required under law to produce 13 appropriations bills for the President's signature by October 1. How many were presented? Three. Three of thirteen. If they had done their job and presented the bills, we would not be in this crisis today.

Let me add, too, that during this year, with the Gingrich-led Congress, we have seen special interests swarming through the Halls of Capitol Hill. They have been pushing for amendments, outrageous amendments.

Let me give an example of some. First, to cut education. The banking interests came in and forced a change which will increase the costs of student loans by \$10 billion. Kids from working families trying to get an education, trying to make it, will face more debt because the Gingrich-led Republicans have bowed to the banking interests.

Then, of course, there is the environmental agenda of the Gingrich Congress. Amazing. Amazing that in one bill, in 28 pages, they wanted to repeal 14 different environmental protection laws, including the right of the Federal Government to monitor arsenic in drinking water. "Did he say arsenic in drinking water?" Yes, that was one of the bills that they wanted to repeal.

Think about that for a second, the extremism of the Gingrich-led environmental agenda.

But one of the worst, of course, is their proposal to increase Medicare

premiums on seniors by 25 percent. They want to cut Medicare to balance the budget.

We all know that changes must be made in Medicare so it will be preserved and strong for years to come. But the Gingrich Republicans have just gone too far. It has been unfortunately, under the Gingrich leadership, a time of crises and chaos.

But no surprise. Listen to the Speaker on the Sunday morning talk shows, and I quote him, "I will cooperate, but I will never compromise." Those are not the words of a person who sits down at a negotiating table looking for a solution. That is the kind of growling and grouching and political rhetoric that most people are sick and tired of.

I have a proposal to change this and end this crisis immediately. It is called no budget, no pay. We are sending 800,000 Federal workers home today without pay. But guess what, Members of Congress still get their paycheck. So I introduced a bill on September 22 that said if Members of Congress do not keep Government running, default on the national debt, then, frankly, they do not get their paychecks. If we turned off the TV cameras and stopped the congressional paychecks, I predict this crisis would be over in 15 minutes.

AMERICA DESERVES BETTER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from Texas [Mr. DOGGETT] is recognized during morning business for 3 minutes.

Mr. DOGGETT. Madam Speaker, you know, to understand the crisis we are going through here in Washington today, you really only need to understand three words, NEWT GINGRICH and Medicare.

You see, from the beginning it has been NEWT's way or no way with reference to the way this Government would operate. NEWT GINGRICH made it very clear in the spring of this year, and he repeated it this summer, he repeated it again this summer, that he wanted this crisis. It was not something he was trying to avoid doing. He wanted to demonstrate to America and to the world that he was king of the mountain and that everybody had to salute him because he was the fount of all knowledge about the problems of the world.

The key part of NEWT's way or no way as far as this particular budget crisis is, of course, the one item that they chose to put on the continuing resolution that they sent over for the courageous veto President Clinton exercised, and that is Medicare. He wanted to send the seniors, he wanted to send the people with disabilities around this country a happy New Year's present in the form of a Medicare premium increase. It is the one irrelevant provision they chose to tack on a continuing resolution which, of course, would never have been necessary to send to the President at all if

they had simply had the willingness to do their job and pass the appropriations bills rather than messing around with all of this agenda of the radical right which has tied them up. It has not been President Clinton that caused them to get only 2 of 13 appropriations bills to his desk by September 30. It has not been the Democratic minority in the House or the Senate. They could not agree amongst themselves as to how crazy they would be with reference to passing what the chairman of the House Committee on Appropriations called payback time to the radical right and holding up the business that should have been occurring in getting these appropriations bills there.

No, cutting Medicare, raising the cost to the ordinary person relying on Medicare and NEWT GINGRICH explained the situation that we face today.

I have been very interested this morning to listen to my Republican colleagues as they responded to this crisis because they have told the people of America two things:

The first one is, "You know, we Republicans are not really as mean as you Democrats say we have been. We are just a little bit mean. I mean, we do not want to totally foul all the water supply of America. We just want to let it be a little bit more dirty than it is today."

On the environment, "We just think the environment ought to be a little more dirty than it is today."

"And we do not believe you should cut off the opportunity of students to go to school, they can pay just a little bit more, just another thousand dollars. It is not as bad as what NEWT GINGRICH and his group proposed in the fall to hike the price by \$5,000 to get a college education. We think raising it \$1,000 on middle-class families who are struggling to get a young person through high school so they can go to college, we think just a little bit more pain is okay."

And to our seniors, "Just a little bit more pain is okay."

Well, I think that America deserves better treatment than that. It is getting through NEWT GINGRICH, and we certainly do not need the kind of Medicare cuts he proposed.

GET THIS GOVERNMENT BACK TO WORK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of May 12, 1995, the gentleman from West Virginia [Mr. WISE] is recognized during morning business for 3 minutes.

Mr. WISE. Madam Speaker, I rise today; the sun has come up over the United States again, and yes, the Government continues, although in a truncated fashion.

In West Virginia, over 17,000 Federal employees face furlough, many of whom will be furloughed or are furloughed today. Many of these Federal employees live in my district, in the Second Congressional District.

We also in our own office, we furloughed half of the congressional employees that work for the Second District. The offices in Charleston and Martinsburg have been reduced to one person answering telephones for emergency services only. The mobile office which visits a different country every day during the month, of course, is not operating. So the congressional office, as well, is complying with this.

I think this is a very, sad state of affairs, Madam Speaker. The only cautious or the good news. I guess, is despite their fact we have so many Federal employees in West Virginia furloughed, so many services cut back, our own congressional services significantly cut back, the only good news is negotiations are taking place.

I predict that something could take place in the next 12 hours. If it does not, then I fear that this standoff is going to last for a long time.

What is really at issue, Madam Speaker? What is at issue is whether the President signs simple legislation that says the Government can continue for 3 more weeks or however long while the Republicans and Democrats, the White House, negotiate, and that simple legislation is about two pages long. I hold this up. It is proportionate in scale. However, what the President was sent was about this big in size. So this is what is needed to keep the Government functioning; this is what the President was sent. He was sent a lot of riders, special interest provisions, budget provisions that ought to be negotiated, a whole lot of strings attached.

This keeps the Federal Government operating. This is what the President was sent. And so what ought to be done is obviously send a single legislation that is necessary.

Unfortunately, had I voted for the continuing resolution or had the President signed it in this form, he would have been signing a Medicare increase, 25 percent, for 300,000 West Virginia senior citizens, costing West Virginia taxpayers even more, because they would have also been supplementing the 40,000 low-income seniors that cannot even afford that monthly premium increase of roughly \$7 a month. He would have been signing other significant changes as well.

What he would have been doing is signing the very budget agreement in many ways that has yet to be negotiated. I have not agreed with the President in every instance, but in this case I happen to think he is correct. When some say he is not doing his job, it is the Congress that has not sent him 11 of the 13 appropriation bills that are necessary for the Government to function. Eleven of their 13 still have not gone to the President 6 weeks after they were due.

We heard a lot of talk about the budget. The House and the Senate only last night finished the budget, well over 6 weeks late. There was nothing